

February 13, 2013

Greetings Senate Natural Resources Committee Members,

Please reject SB78.

It appears that the primary sponser of SB-78, Senator Casperson, does not believe the best interests of the citizens of Michigan as a whole or the forest lands of the State of Michigan are as important as the timber industry which the Senator Casperson has close ties to.

I have read the Michigan Environmental Council's comments. Below are two such comments.

The bill's sponsor has stated in the past that his intent with this legislation is to eliminate, once and for all, the DNR's fledgling "Living Legacies" or Biodiversity Stewardship Areas program. In doing so, SB 78 attacks instead the very idea that the state has a critical role to play in protecting and improving the state's natural systems and native plants and animals.

Biodiversity is also fundamental to the state's Forest Action Plan, which helped Michigan bring in \$22 million for cooperative agreements in recent years, including \$800,000 in Great Lakes Restoration Funds for five projects including Chevy in the Hole restoration efforts in Flint. Removing biodiversity as a forest management tool available to the DNR risks the state's ability to do cooperative agreements to handle EAB, Fire Management, and Private Land stewardship programs. It would undermine our eligibility for program such as America's Great Outdoors or other emerging programs, many of which include biological diversity as a goal.

Also while reading the text of proposed changes I am of the impression that using words such as "considering" and "voluntary" are ambiguous and have no teeth when it comes to enforcement or actual action.

It does not surprise me that Senator Casperson is choosing to try and dismantle biological diversity conservation and sustainable forestry on state lands. Like I mentioned earlier Senator Casperson has close ties to the timber industry. By voting in favor of the SB-78 it would make it easier for the Senator's friends to conduct their business and I am assuming Senator Casperson is looking ahead to the future for his own special interests in the timber industry as well.

Please reject SB-78.

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